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PREL, PTER, KDEM, AF, RS
SUBJECT: DEMARCHES DELIVERED: RUSSIAN COOPERATION ON
AFGHANISTAN, PARIS SUPPORT CONFERENCE AND OSCE ROLE IN
AFGHANISTAN

REF: A. STATE 44890
[1](#)B. STATE 44359
[1](#)C. STATE 39820

Classified By: Political M/C Alice G. Wells for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

[1](#)1. (C) We delivered reftel demarches to MFA Afghanistan Desk Chief Yuri Khokhlov on May 8, emphasizing the U.S. desire to cooperate with Russia on counter-narcotics, counter-terrorism and military equipment assistance to Afghanistan. Khokhlov agreed that the U.S. and Russia shared similar goals with respect to Afghanistan - Russia wanted to see the Taliban defeated, the narcotics trade eliminated, and the country become stable and secure. He said that one point upon which we differ was the possibility of negotiating with and allowing even a limited number of "moderate" Taliban into the Afghan government, which Russia believed would radicalize the government and further destabilize the country. Khokhlov offered the following initial responses to our demarches:

Russian Cooperation on Afghanistan

[1](#)2. (C) Khokhlov appreciated the U.S. efforts to address GOR concerns regarding engaging the Afghan government on the issue of military aid. After examining the non-papers we delivered, Khokhlov said the MFA would send the list of arms and equipment required by the Afghan National Army to the Russian Embassy in Kabul with instructions to begin discussions with the U.S. Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) and Afghan Ministry of Defense. The MFA would also send the list to the Russian MOD to identify what was available in the Russian inventory. Khokhlov thought the GOR could provide much of the material as donations with a few exceptions: the MI-17 light lift aircraft might only be available for purchase at 40 or 50 percent less than the market price, and some of the vehicles listed might not be in the Russian inventory. He stressed that the GOR would need information and guarantees regarding the destination and use of the items it provided. Khokhlov commented that, since the Afghans had demonstrated little appreciation for previous Russian military donations, it had been difficult to obtain intra-agency agreement on resuming aid, adding that this time it would be helpful for the Afghan government to show "appropriate appreciation" for Russian assistance. (Note: We understand that the poor quality of previous Russian military donations likely contributed to the tepid response in Kabul. End note.)

Paris Support Conference for Afghanistan

[1](#)3. (C) Khokhlov thought it likely that FM Lavrov would attend the June 12 Paris Support Conference for Afghanistan. He

said Russia would consider additional assistance, but explained that the GOR was concerned about pledging bilateral support for Afghanistan for fear of the funds being diverted by corrupt Afghan officials. Khokhlov also stated that Russia would not contribute to the 2009 and 2010 Afghan elections. The GOR was working through the World Bank on public health and education support programs, including providing \$4 million for the Kabul Polytechnic University, \$2 million for the Oil and Gas College in Mazar-e Sharif, and \$3 million for a maternity hospital in Mazar-e Sharif.

OSCE Role in Afghanistan

¶4. (C) Khokhlov said there was support within the MFA for the OSCE taking a limited role in Afghanistan, although he could not provide an official response at this time. He thought it likely the GOR would support OSCE training of Afghan customs officials to help secure Afghanistan's borders, a Russian priority. Khokhlov had no response when we stressed the importance of conducting some of the training inside Afghanistan. He doubted the GOR would support an OSCE role in Afghan elections or any activity that approached "changing regimes and ideologies."

GOR Concerned by Afghan Narcotics

¶5. (C) Khokhlov reiterated Russia's concern over the threat posed by Afghan narcotics, stressing, however, that the GOR was primarily concerned with the ability of the Taliban and Islamic extremists to use narcotics to finance their

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activities in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Central Asia and Chechnya. The impact of narcotics on Russian society was a secondary issue. Khokhlov explained that with Afghanistan unable to control its own borders it was up to Central Asian governments to stop narcotics smuggling, but these governments were largely corrupt and lacked the will, and in some cases the capacity, to take action. He assessed Uzbekistan as maintaining the greatest level of control over its border with Afghanistan; Tajikistan as having some control; and Turkmenistan having no control at all. Iran was able to control the northern part of its border where the Revolutionary Guard was active, but in the south the Iranian police were largely ineffective. Khokhlov confirmed that Russia had a counter-narcotics liaison officer at its Kabul Embassy.

Comment

¶6. (C) We will continue to reinforce at higher levels our interest in greater Russian cooperation in promoting Afghanistan's security and economic development. Russian promises of assistance rarely have been followed by rapid implementation, and we welcome Embassy Kabul's read on whether the Russians move quickly to begin dialogue with the CSTC-A.

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